

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0448

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINT, UR
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE SOVIET PROVOCATION AGAINST SAKHAROV

REF: 75 MOSCOW 17597

1. WELL-KNOWN JEWISH DISSIDENT MARK AZBEL TOLD
EMBOFF JANUARY 12 OF WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS ANOTHER
"KGB PROVOCATION" AGAINST SAKHAROV. AZBEL SAID
HE HEARD THE STORY DIRECTLY FROM MRS. SAKHAROV.
ACCORDING TO AZBEL, SOME TEN DAYS AGO, SAKHAROV WAS
WALKING NEAR HIS HOME WHEN TWO BIG, YOUNG MEN
CAME UP TO HIM, JOSTLED HIM AND MADE OFF WITH HIS HAT.
AT THIS POINT THE DRIVER OF A BLACK VOLGA WHICH HAPPENED
TO BE PARKED THERE GOT OUT AND TRIED TO GET SAKHAROV
TO GO WITH HIM TO MAKE A PROTEST AT THE NEAREST POLICE
STATION. WHEN SAKHAROV REFUSED, SAYING THAT THE IN-
CIDENT WAS OF NO IMPORTANCE, THE DRIVER BEGAN INSISTING
AND FOLLOWED SAKHAROV HOME SUGGESTING THAT HE GO
WITH HIM IN THE CAR TO THE POLICE STATION.

2. AZBEL SAID THAT THE SAKHAROV'S ARE CONVINCED
THAT THIS WAS ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO UNSETTLE HIM.
WHILE THE EVENTS ARE LESS DRAMATIC THAN THOSE IN
REFTEL, THE SAKHAROV'S REPORTEDLY FEEL THAT THEY ARE
NOW THE OBJECTS OF AN ORCHESTRATED PLAN OF HARRASS-
MENT. AZBEL SAID THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT SAKHAROV
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WOULD "GO PUBLIC" WITH THIS LATEST PROVOCATION. HE

ADDED THAT IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT SAKHAROV HAD ASKED THOSE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS WHO KNEW ABOUT THE PREVIOUS PROVOCATION NOT TO PUBLISH IT. SUCH ATTEMPTS AT INTIMIDATION, CONCLUDED AZBEL, WOULD ONLY MAKE SAKHAROV STILL MORE DETERMINED TO CARRY ON HIS WORK, WHILE THE FACT OF HIS NOBEL PRIZE HAS GIVEN HIM INCREASED IMMUNITY FROM ARREST.

MATLOCK

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